

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-10 and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 102 (a) over Kidd et al (WO 00/61267). Kidd et al claims the benefit of the earliest filing date of April 14, 1999. By this amendment, the specification has been amended to claim the benefit of the earlier filing date of January 29, 1999 as set forth in applicants' signed declaration. Accordingly, Kidd et al is not "prior art" under 35 USC 102 and this ground of rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 have been rejected under 35 USC 102 (a) over Moya (6,179,132). Moya discloses porous membrane products having a porous perfluorocarbon substrate having its surface completely modified with a hydrophilic coating having hydrophilic functional groups. In contrast, applicants' claimed hollow fiber membranes are formed of hydrophobic perfluorinated thermoplastic polymers having hydrophobic surfaces. Accordingly, this ground of rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) over Kidd et al. As set forth above, Kidd et al is not "prior art". Accordingly, this ground of rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicants' claims define patentable subject matter and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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